/13 cont./

643 The grand man acts as land head for the whole of the tribe.
795 It is he who has the care of the sanctuary of mama gbê and who
241 prays each year in the presence of a large gathering of people for the fertility of the soil.

643 The grand man is the priest of Odun, divinity whom the Boni
743 regard as avenger of offenses against moral and religious law; by
796 virtue of this, he alone is qualified to administer the oath against
982 wôli (sorcery) and to implore the mercy of Odun toward those who have gone against his laws by fighting with arms.

643 In his religious functions this usually weak and unobtrusive
152 man acts with sovereign authority and assurance, and we have several times seen people tremble before him.

643 If someone has seriously transgressed the customary laws, or
681 if he has stolen, committed adultery, given blows, poured forth serious insults or curses, the grand man inflicts on him punishment
• [723] proportional to the gravity of the offense, such as making planks, /13/ a boat, pounding rice (if it is a woman). The product of the punishment is acquired by the grand man, as are the fines in money which he imposes in less serious cases.

643 For example in October, 1952, two adolescents of Boniville,
685 Awêtipay and Adyuka, were surprised while they were trying to break into an inhabited house; the grand man sentenced them forthwith to three days of forced labor, in the course of which he made them clean the approaches to the village and collect for his benefit wood for heating.

643 He can also punish disobedient or disrespectful young men
689 by making them do work reserved for women, such as weeding
462 the approaches to the village and the removal of dog droppings.

643 The grand man can confine a man to Boni villages by for-
681 bidding him to go beyond l'Enfant Perdu to the north and Kormotibo to the south; that is called ɨtafu sama (ɨtafu • captive). The man concerned, deprived of means of earning his living, thus becomes dependent on his family until he makes honorable amends.

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The laws of Odun. The cult of Odun (Odû) is the keystone of the social and religious structure of the Refugee Blacks. It is a very secret cult; its rites are not practiced in the presence of outsiders and all curiosity about it meets with frank hostility. The Boni, who talk rather freely about the cults of possession, are mute on the subject of Odun, and one may spend years among them without even hearing this name uttered.

The worship of Odun is common to the Boni and the Saramaka (perhaps this is what explains the trustful relations which exist between the two groupings). Among the Djuka it is replaced by the worship of Gwangwêla (Granata), which has exactly the same functions and rites.

Odun is not to be confused with the creator God Nana (Masa Gadu). The myths explaining the relationship of these two entities were not known by our informants, but it is clear that Odun was sent to men by Masa Gadu as legislator and judge.

Odun's laws have a profound originality, as much by their content as by the sanctions which accompany them. It is not excessive to speak of a religious and moral doctrine of the Refugee Blacks.

These laws appear in negative form. A certain number of acts and behavior are forbidden to those who have entered the society of the Refugee Blacks by taking an oath which binds them for good and all. Offenders will be punished without the direct intervention of men, by the all-powerful action of Odun, who will kill them or /196/ strike them down with sicknesses. As a general rule, Odun's punishment is death; this is what explains the fear his name inspires.

Odun forbids:

--Sorcery, wisi, in the most general sense, that is, any magic action having as its purpose the killing, making ill, and in a general way doing harm to another person.

/136 cont./

[693] [754] [291] --Vengeance; if someone believes himself to be the victim of witchcraft, he must under no circumstances engage in counterwitchcraft or invoke his ancestors against his enemy. He may ask only for the protection of the Nisa. It is Odun who [784] will avenge him by sooner or later killing the evil-doer.

[283] --Violence in any form whatever. It is regarded as a particularly serious offense against the laws of Odun to strike with an armed hand and to make human blood flow (1).

[634] 1. That explains the nonchalance with which the society of the Refugee Blacks admits the right of punishment granted to the wronged husband, who must strike only with bare fists in front of witnesses, never in the bush nor on the river. Fear of seeing [824] human blood flow explains the [952] reticence of the Boni toward minor surgical operations.

[641] [581] --Any attack on personal liberty by material or moral coercion; in particular, neither a man nor woman may be constrained to remain in a marriage which has ceased to please him; nobody may be forced to reside here or there.

[203] The forms of magic so popular among West Indians, aimed at capturing a person's love, are for this reason rejected by the Refugee Blacks and considered as a form of wisi.

[769] --Any evocation of the spirits of the dead, even to ask [954] their protection, other than in the public ceremonies provided for by custom. Thus nobody must go to the cemetery to pray alone on his parents' grave. Whoever would do that would immediately be considered as wisima.

/222 cont./

114 784 The various works treating of the Refugee Diaries point out well the importance of the kunu, but it seems to us that the functioning of this institution (for in fact a social institution is certainly concerned here) has not been clearly understood.

784 613 A kunu is attached to a matrilineage in the literal sense (949). It extends obligatorily to all the members of the matrilineage and can strike only them.

For example, my kunu can strike my sister's son but not my wife nor my children (they are subject to the kunu of their own lineage). /223/

[782] The kunu, striking the lineage as a whole, can be appeased only by prayers uniting (at least in principle) the whole lineage. That is the respect in which the kunu may be defined [591] as a social institution, for it is, we shall see, the principal cement holding the groups together.

The unleashing of a kunu does not necessarily and immediately follow the destruction of a sanctuary or the death of a dagawa snake. The god thus offended avenges itself by making a certain number of members of the lineage sick and 784 by causing limited misfortunes to happen. When things are 613 at that point the kunu can still be exorcised by prayers and 782 offerings. In 1957 the beginning of a kunu was manifesting itself thus in the Awara Bakba lineage of Asim; very frightened, the members of the lineage made offerings and prayers to exorcise it.

784 But if the lineage people neglect the warnings of the god, 613 if through laziness or selfishness too great a number of them [673] are absent from the collective prayers and do not take part in [961] the offerings, prayers and offerings will be refused and the god will kill one of them. From then on the kunu is unleashed and can no longer leave the lineage. Its involuntary bearer [923] will have to bequeath it upon his death to a member of the lineage, who cannot refuse this legacy and must immediately

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Not just anyone may resort to divination on behalf of someone else: only the elders have the right to do it, and it has happened that the grand man punished offenders severely.

Fate. The Refugee Blacks do not attribute all misfortunes to supra-human causes. They have the notion of natural accident. They say ... They say ... or again ... misfortune met me. They also accept the idea of natural death. They usually regard as natural death that of the very old, the infirm from birth, and sickly children.

Divination blames fate in ten to 20 per cent of accidents. It is the usual explanation for hunting accidents.

/238/

Magic Forces

As we have shown, the Refugee Blacks consider beings and things as a world of forces capable of acting on one another, outside of time and space, according to laws which men cannot understand but of which they believe they have a partial and empirical knowledge transmitted by tradition since the time of the ancestors. They distinguish negative magic forces, wiri, which have the effect of diminishing the vital force of men, which makes them sick or kills them, and positive magic forces, ɔbia, which come from the gods: the ɔbia come to increase the vital force of men, giving them protection, immunity, or knowledge. But no power is in essence a principle of good or evil; nothing is impossible for him who knows the formulas; this is why the magic of the Refugee Blacks is reduced to a perpetual and indecisive struggle between ɔbia and wiri.

Wiri. Wiri is sorcery in the African sense of the term, that is, the use of magic procedures to harm others; wiri is for the Refugee Blacks the pre-eminently criminal act, at the same time against morals and against society. The struggle against

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789 392 There exist special 2bia for the building of boats. The opening of the hull is the first, a delicate operation, sometimes fails. To insure its success everyone possesses a personal recipe inherited from his father or uncle. It does not call by name and directly upon the action of a god; the Boni do not have a clear idea about the origin or the nature of these rites. It is a matter of a maceration of two or three kinds of leaves, generally belonging to the secondary flora which surrounds the villages, and they vary from one man to another. One pours this maceration over the overturned boat before the burning is begun, while saying: "The boat must not split, it must open well."

832 [893] The laws of Odun forbid the use of charms aimed at forcing the love of a woman one desires, that would infringe on a person's freedom, therefore wizi. It is very /251/ possible however that certain people go to get charms of this kind from Creole magicians. But they take for granted, on the other hand, the 2bia believed to permit men who have little success with women to have more in the future.

951 789 There does not seem to be any hierarchy of 2bia nor is one category of 2bia believed to be stronger by nature than another; in fact, the Refugee Blacks are seen to go readily to ask one divinity for an 2bia in order to protect themselves from another. Here is an example:

464 [648] In 1951 the administration had a systematic cleaning of the Petit Inini River begun, in order to rid its course of innumerable pieces of fallen wood which were making the use of motors on boats difficult. A team of Boni were employed in this work under the direction of a Creole foreman. While the [916] [789] work was being done, a Papa gadu "came into the head" of an old woman named M... of the Awara Bakka lo. It revealed that it was opposed to this work, for it lived in exactly this 464 976 place and the noise of the motors bothered it. Upon their return to Boni country, the men charged with this work learned the